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ABSTRACT

After years of reform and accompanying frustration, public schools of choice have become one of today's most popular school reform strategies. More than 20 states have either passed choice legislation or are considering such action. At the present, plans based on parental influence represent the majority of district choice plans, including magnet schools and controlled choice schools. This analysis, composed of seven chapters, examines the controversy of school choice and the agendas supporting it. While one agenda detailed within this document can be characterized as "reaction to the present," the second, a well-known agenda for choice is actually "choice as a means for desegregating schools." A third, less known agenda for choice is presented as "choice as a catalyst for change." Because educators must implement policies that not only benefit individual students but also ensure that schools represent the broad, democratic interests of society as a whole, this analysis attempts to assist educators to make informed decisions about choice based on the context in which they and their students teach and learn. Examples of educational values and of curriculum and instructional elements of "choice" programs, developed by the Minnesota Department of Education, are appended. The bibliography contains 53 references. (KM)

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Issues Analysis

Public Schools of Choice

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FOREWORD

After years of new policies in response to calls for reform and radical restructuring of our schools, choice has become the hot topic in reform literature. The media perpetuate the sense that things are not right and focus on choice as the solution.

Research and past and current examples of choice are discussed in this thoughtful analysis of public schools of choice. Viewed as *the* answer by federal and state policy makers, choice is viewed more critically by the authors. There, in fact, appear to be no definitive answers in the choice literature. The world of schooling is complex, and although choice may be a positive condition to revitalize schools and achieve responsiveness, it alone is not sufficient, according to the authors.

ASCD's values dominate the discussion here: choice with *diversity* and choice with *equity*. The authors advocate addressing choice within the broad objectives of public education—balancing the private good with the public good—and responding to needs by using uncommon means to achieve common ends.

This analysis presents a realistic look at the potentials for schools and programs of choice. The authors have examined the issues from various angles and produced a document that educators can use as a guide when discussing their own hopes and fears about choice.

Patricia Conran
ASCD President, 1989-1990

Introduction

After years of reform and accompanying frustration, public schools of choice have become one of today's most talked about school reform strategies. The President of the United States, governors, economists, school critics, and respondents to the Gallup Poll all find choice attractive, albeit for different reasons. At the federal level and in many states, policy makers are looking to choice as *the* answer, a fast-acting solution to the serious problems besetting schools today. More than 20 states have either passed choice legislation or are considering such action—testimony to the popularity of the idea. And with all this activity, choice has become a hot topic for the media.

Choice has become controversial because there are at least three agendas supporting it. Proponents and opponents of each of these agendas, though using the same word, have different motives, issues, and goals in mind when they speak of choice.

One agenda can be characterized as "reaction to the present." Proponents of this agenda are dissatisfied with education as it now exists, especially student achievement, the perceived unresponsiveness of the bureaucracy and professionals, failed improvement efforts, and, most of all, unmet educational needs. The purpose of this agenda is to improve our present educational system with respect to these issues.

A second, well-known agenda for choice is "choice as a means for desegregating schools." This agenda results from dissatisfaction in locales with diverse racial and ethnic populations. This choice agenda is controversial because some view it as a means for assisting people underserved by our public education system, while others view it as a way to maintain the desegregation status quo. Proponents of choice for desegregating schools argue that choice allows poorer families to make choices that richer families make when they move into neighborhoods with exceptional schools, send their children to private schools, or exert extreme influence in their existing settings. But opponents of choice argue that, in many

cases, actual implementation of choice has resulted in increased segregation.

A third, less known agenda for choice is "choice as a catalyst for change." This agenda is advocated in communities already doing well on measures such as student test scores and dropout rates. This agenda focuses on variety, options, self-direction, flexibility, and responsiveness as the primary benefits of choice. Its purpose is to provide for individual educational needs in a quicker, more responsive way. All of these agendas relate to ASCD's interest in choice.

The mission of ASCD is to develop quality education for all students. Our values include *balance in the curriculum, self-direction, equity,* and *cultural pluralism,* each of which relates directly to public schools of choice. What's more, many of our members are affected by state or local choice policies. They are facing questions of whether to implement choice and how to achieve equity if they do. In this analysis, we want to raise the debate on choice to a more thoughtful level and to assist our readers in making their own decisions about choice, based on the context in which they and their students teach and learn.

1
Defining Choice

In educational reform, the broad term *restructuring* is confusing, while choice, a subset of restructuring, is something we can all see, understand, and experience. Americans naturally like the word *choice*, with its sense of power, freedom, and options. Choice is integral to a democratic society and a free market economy, conveying an inherent sense of quality and variety.

To make a choice means to select freely. Plans for school choice always involve parents' influence or control over the selection of a school for their children. John Witte (1989) has divided choice plans into two categories: those using parental influence and those using parental control. Witte defines *influence* as the parents' ability to affect a decision ultimately made by others, usually school authorities, whereas he defines *control* as the parents' ability to have the final say on what school their children will attend. We have based Figure 1, (see page 2), on these concepts (Berreth).

Influence

Plans based on parental influence represent the majority of district choice plans, including magnet schools and controlled-choice schools. Magnet schools are schools (or units within schools) organized around a specialty such as the arts or a traditional approach to the basics. Parents and students can generally choose from one or more of these specialty schools in a district, depending on enrollment criteria. Magnet schools have typically been associated with desegregation plans, but their numbers are now expanding because of the appeal of choosing schools, regardless of the desegregation issue.

Controlled-choice schools offer as much choice as possible among all schools in a district while maintaining racial balance in almost all schools. In this model of choice, the school district remains the contracting and regulating authority.

Recently, district-level approaches to choice have been augmented by statewide systems of choice. In Arkansas, Iowa,

Minnesota, and Nebraska, for example, parents can seek enrollment for their children in any school in any district. State funds then follow the student to the receiving school.

Control

Choice models based on parental control are represented primarily by voucher plans. Voucher plans were tried in the 1970s with support from the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity. Under voucher plans, the partial or full cost of a student's education is provided in the form of a voucher that parents can use to purchase education in either public or private schools. Tuition tax credits, in which income tax deductions are made available for the tuition paid to private schools, can be considered a variation of this plan.

Figure 1.

FORMS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

Outside Public Policy	
Level of Parental Choice	Option
Control	• Selection of where one lives • Selection of private schools

Within Public Policy	
Level of Parental Choice	Options
Influence	• District level choice • Magnet schools • Controlled choice schools • Private/alternative schools receiving public school district funding • Statewide choice of public schools
Control	• Vouchers • Tuition tax credits

Adapted from John F. Witte, "Choice and Control in American Education: An Analytical Overview," Conference on Choice and Control in American Education, sponsored by La-Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 17–19, 1989.

2

Traditional Choices
A Short History of Choice

Choice has had a curious history in the United States. A few parents, students, and teachers have always had choices. Their options have included:

- *Choice Among Private Schools.* Since the very first schools were established, parents have made choices between and among private schools. Private schools range from the elite to the ordinary, from the parochial to the secular, from boys only to girls only to coed. Of course, only parents with financial resources have been able to exercise this choice.
- *The Public or Private Choice.* Similarly, parents with the resources have been able to choose between public and private schools. But the vast majority of American children are in public schools. We do not know to what extent this custom is the result of choice, since we do not know who has the financial resources to exercise other options, nor do we know how those who can afford this choice decide whether to exercise their option.
- *Choice Among Public Schools.* Within public school systems, some students have had access to good schools through indirect means. First, parents often select a family home on the basis of the quality of the neighborhood school. Second, within the public schools, a few parents manage to influence decision makers to support their choices, even if there is no public policy that promotes such explicit selections.
- *Within-School Programs.* It is not exactly what we mean by "schools of choice" today, but programs within schools can also be matters of choice, for example, gifted, vocational, or performing arts programs. At the high school level, students may choose elective courses like algebra, drama, and tennis.

So, to some degree, parents, students, and teachers have always had and made choices. Generally, however, school districts have not set policies to maximize choice nor rationales to support the goal of maximum choice of schools, programs, and courses; and the public has yet to demand a formal set of policies for promoting choice.

3

What Are the Problems that Choice Might Solve?

Several conditions are pushing parents, policy makers, administrators, and teachers to consider schools of choice. The existing programs and structures of public schools have become suspect in light of poor student achievement, a lack of responsiveness to the concerns of parents and students, the shortcomings of overt desegregation strategies, and the difficulty of revitalizing public schools.

Poor Student Achievement

Today, more public school students are poor and of color. These youngsters complete high school less often than their white and wealthier peers, while expectations are rising for them as workers and citizens. Over the last 20 years, blacks and Hispanics have narrowed the achievement gap in reading and writing between them and their white counterparts by 50 percent. In spite of this impressive gain, however, the gap remains great.

In general, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data demonstrate that all students are acquiring the basics in reading and math. They can read simple material and can add, subtract, multiply, and divide (Shanker 1990b). What students in general appear to lack is the preparation to move into the more complex kinds of work demanded by employers and institutions of higher education. Scholar Lauren Resnick (1986) states that "[Employers and higher educators] seem to be seeking [not only] general skills such as the ability to write and speak effectively, [but also] the ability to learn easily on the job, the ability to use quantitative skills needed to apply various tools of production and management, the ability to read complex material, and the ability to build and evaluate arguments." NAEP data do not permit judgments about these abilities for individual schools and communities; nevertheless, an

uneasy sense that things are not right pervades the thinking of educators, policy makers, and citizens.

Lack of Responsiveness to the Concerns of Parents and Students

Many people feel frustrated when they are not allowed to make major decisions concerning the education of their children. In their view, public schooling has been captured by an unresponsive bureaucracy whose agenda is not congruent with students' needs. They hope that schools of choice will be the means for less wealthy citizens to select schools, just as middle and upper class families do when they buy homes in neighborhoods with presumed excellent schools.

Advocates believe that schools of choice may provide a system of rewards and sanctions to make unresponsive public educators sensitive to the desires of their clients. For example, Chubb (1989) argues that choice will encourage schools to "have the incentives and flexibility to organize effectively, to develop missions, to operate more professionally, and to develop bonds with parents and students." Fliegel (1989a), when discussing his experiences in East Harlem, states that "Choice gives youngsters, teachers, and parents a sense that they own the school because they selected the school and because the school attempts to meet their interests and abilities. The concept of ownership is a good capitalist idea."

Likewise, competition for students, advocates of choice believe, will promote the changes needed in schools. They refer to several shining examples such as Central Park East in District 4 in New York City or the schools in Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools.

We agree that something interesting and important is going on in these places of choice. We can't be sure, however, that what is of interest and consequence about these schools stems from the variable of choice—we do not have that kind of certain evidence. Nor can we claim that the insertion of competition into the arena of public schools will, in and of itself, ensure school success. Competition, after all, has always existed in the private sector; nevertheless, U.S. companies have recently lost major portions of their markets to

other global corporations. In the corporate world, competition may be necessary, but it is not sufficient for promoting significant change. This may also be true in the schools.

Further, the consequences of failure for schools are different from those for corporations. Braniff Airlines, for example, has failed several times because of deep-seated problems in its operations. Other companies may take over Braniff's former routes and cities and provide service equal or superior to Braniff's. But if a public school fails and no other institution takes its place, how will the children be served, and how will the public benefit?

Shortcomings of Overt Desegregation Strategies

While court-ordered strategies did achieve desegregation mandates, some participating schools found themselves without a sense of community or common purpose. In order to promote such feelings of community and common purpose, magnet schools were created. These schools attempt to ensure equal access to all racial groups, basing enrollment upon program specificities and/or entrance criteria. For example, the St. Louis public schools have created a military academy, and the Boston public schools instituted a school for international studies. These magnet schools expect that by shifting the focus toward program specificities and away from the usual entrance criteria (the student's neighborhood), the schools can bring together students who have common interests regardless of race.

Difficulty of Revitalizing Public Schools

The environment surrounding public and private organizations today is turbulent and unpredictable. Rapid changes in technology and knowledge are influencing the labor market, requiring employees who can respond quickly to new demands and to the realities of a global economy. The political environment of the nation and the world is restive, with special interest groups using the political process to further their specific issues, resulting in dramatic realignments of power.

For schools, much of the turbulence comes from demographic shifts in student populations. More children are poor and of color, and expectations for their performance—and for the performance of all students—are rising; yet public confidence in the schools is low. Schools have responded to this turbulence with retrenchment, improvement, and, in relatively few cases, restructuring.

Many efforts to improve the schools have fallen short of expectations. Policy reforms directed at improving the schools have been followed by other reforms when the earlier ones did not work (Wise 1988). Faced with the frustrations of unmet expectations, educators and the public are looking for other alternatives to stimulate major changes in public education.

Introduction of choice, advocates believe, will cause everyone in the system to examine the schools from top to bottom so that rational choices can be made. Once that examination is made, harmful practices, inadequate teaching and curriculum, and even inadequate physical plants can be exposed and remedied. Advocates of choice use achievement scores of magnet schools as evidence to further their arguments. For example, Mary Ann Raywid, Joe Nathan, and Sy Fliegel each argue that schools of choice promote increases in achievement among minority students. They point to overall increases in test scores, especially in East Harlem.

But again, policy makers and planners need to weigh whether choice will achieve this goal, whether there are other methods that accomplish the same end, and whether some unintended consequences of choice will in fact outweigh the catalytic value of introducing it into the system.

4
What We Know About Choice

In a democratic republic, the reasons *for* doing something are as important as the effects *of* doing something. As authors of this analysis, we believe that educating citizens for a democratic society is a necessary and sufficient reason for the existence of public schools of any kind, and we acknowledge that advocates of public schools of choice have their reasons for supporting such an effort. Any discussion about choice should encourage the interested parties in a community to state their reasons for schools of choice or for any kind of schools. Whatever the stakeholders decide then must be examined in light of how democratic citizenship is promoted equitably.

At a White House education conference in 1989, President Bush and Education Secretary Lauro Cavasos stated that "choice works." However, based on our own review of the issue, we think such claims go beyond the empirical evidence, which does not support the unqualified assertion that choice works. The debate requires better evidence.

Our purpose here is not to debunk the case for public school choice made by its advocates but to move public debate on choice to a more thoughtful level through examination of underlying assumptions, evaluation of data, and identification of issues.

Basic Assumptions Underlying Choice

State and local control of our schools has always been balanced by widely held agreement on common learnings such as citizenship, enculturation, and interpersonal relations in a pluralistic society. The individual interests of parents, students, and educators—the private good—have traditionally been subordinated to these broader aims—the public good. But schools of choice threaten the balance, moving from greater decision making at the societal level to greater decision making at the individual consumer level.

This consumer emphasis is based on a set of assumptions that include these:

- There is no one best school for everyone.
- It is necessary to provide diversity in schools.
- Students will perform better and accomplish more in schools they have chosen.
- Teachers will be more committed to and satisfied with their work in schools they have chosen.
- Parents will be more supportive of and satisfied with schools they have chosen.
- Schools of choice create shared values and expectations that result in the accomplishment of common goals.

These assumptions seem to make good sense, based as they are on the our affinity for self-direction. Still, what do we know about how valid they are?

The Effects of Choice

As stated earlier, choice can take a variety of forms—vouchers, open enrollment, magnet schools, within-school, between-school, within-district, post-secondary enrollment, and re-entry programs for school drop-outs. Just as choice can take a variety of different forms, so too it can have a variety of effects.

Evidence on the effects of choice comes from three main sources: the Alum Rock Voucher Experiment, studies of public alternative schools and magnet schools, and comparisons of student achievement in public and private schools.

The Alum Rock voucher system

The Alum Rock experiment, Alum Rock Union School District, San Jose, California, one of the few examples of comprehensive public school choice in a single system, proved less than successful for several practical reasons. The initial design of the voucher system was compromised in a number of important respects by local political opposition; the ground rules of parent choice were changed several times; and teachers were unsure of how to manage the development of alternative programs (Cohen and Farrar 1977). For these reasons, most choice advocates feel the Alum Rock

experiment does not accurately portray what choice can do under more favorable circumstances.

But the Alum Rock demonstration does show how mixed and perplexing the effects of choice programs can be. Parents in Alum Rock—many of them low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking—seemed to quickly gain an understanding of their choices. Initially, the majority chose schools based primarily on location rather than educational program. As parents got more experience with choice and their children got older, the proportion of parents choosing schools *outside* their neighborhood doubled—from about 11 percent to about 22 percent—from the first to the third year of the demonstration (Bridge and Blackman 1978). Even this increase in the number of parents who overtly exercised choice left the majority of parents sending their children to the neighborhood school either as a result of a conscious choice or without exercising their right to choose.

Thus, introducing choice in Alum Rock, even on a relatively comprehensive and sustained basis, with considerable additional financial support, seemed to have little effect on established patterns of parental choice. Likewise, it made little difference in instructional practice among schools or on reading scores. Empirical studies of the content of instructional programs in Alum Rock schools showed no significant differences among alternative programs on such dimensions as pacing of content, use of English or Spanish in instruction, or the degree of teacher or student initiation of instruction (Barker et al. 1981). Nor did empirical studies show any significant differences among alternative programs on measures of student reading achievement (Capell 1981).

Alternative and magnet schools

A potential counter-case to the Alum Rock evidence is the alternative school program in Community District 4, East Harlem, New York City. In District 4, the teachers developed alternative programs with support from district administrators over an extended period. Most of the district's 30 or so alternative programs serve junior high school students, with a small number of elementary schools involved. All junior high students are required to choose their schools; alternative schools are available to elementary

students, but most go to their neighborhood schools. Average districtwide reading achievement has risen fairly steadily over the life of the program, but no evidence is available to show what proportion of the gain in reading scores can be attributed to the effects of alternative programs (Elmore 1989b).

Raywid's (1984) comprehensive review of research on alternative schools reveals that these schools seem to be distinguished by a clear sense of purpose, a shared sense of values, high morale among teachers and students, parental satisfaction, and a perception among teachers of higher student achievement.

Recently, Blank's (1989) comprehensive review of research on magnet schools shows that urban districts enroll relatively large proportions of students in magnet programs (about 20 percent at the high school level in the average urban district), that fewer than one-fourth of the schools surveyed used academic achievement as a selection criterion, and that the typical magnet school has higher average academic achievement than non-magnet schools. The higher-performing magnet programs are characterized by strong leadership, a coherent program theme, and high district support. It is not clear, however, whether magnet programs increase student achievement or whether they simply concentrate academically motivated students in a few schools, leaving less motivated students in regular schools.

In a study of high school enrollment plans in four large U.S. cities, Moore and Davenport (1989) found significant stratification of students by race, income, and academic achievement. Moore and Davenport conducted a two-year study of choice at the high school level in four large cities: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. They reported that:

> School choice has, by and large, become a new, improved method of student sorting, in which schools pick and choose among students. In this sorting process, black and Hispanic students, low-income students, students with low achievement, students with absence and behavior problems, handicapped students, and limited-English-proficiency students have very limited opportunities to participate in popular-option high schools and programs. Rather, students at risk are proportionately

> concentrated in schools which ... characteristically exhibit low levels of expectations for their students, deplorable levels of course failure and retention, and extremely low levels of graduation and basic skill achievement.

It is possible, however, that schools surveyed in Moore and Davenport's study reflected poor program design and violated characteristics found in successful choice programs. Joe Nathan, a senior fellow at the Minnesota Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, indicated that most effective plans had the following elements:

- A clear statement of goals and objectives for all schools and their students;
- Information and counseling to help parents select among various programs for their children;
- Student assignments and transfer policies that do not discriminate against students on the basis of past achievement or behavior;
- Nondiscriminatory admission policies that draw from a wide spectrum of students, not "first come-first served" admissions;
- Encouragement and assistance for most schools within a given geographic area to develop distinctive features, rather than simply a concentration of resources in a few schools;
- Opportunities for educators in the schools themselves to create programs;
- Available transportation within a reasonable area for all students, with a priority given to those coming from low-income and non-English-speaking families;
- A requirement that dollars should follow students (i.e., sending and receiving institutions should not both receive funding);
- Procedures that promote more desegregation and integration among students; and
- Provisions for continuing oversight and modification.

Moreover, Nathan and Fliegel argue that choice does work in inner-city locations. Choice, they believe, should be evaluated in locations such as East Harlem, where many of the effective plan elements could be found, not in Chicago, where almost every effective element is missing. Raywid and others point to overall increases in test scores in Manhattan's Spanish Harlem as evidence

that most students benefited in programs that used choice properly. Based on these findings, then, we can conclude that schools that develop distinctive instructional programs, coupled with parent and student choice, can be associated with high levels of student and teacher motivation and positive effects on student achievement. We cannot, however, conclude that choice alone has positive effects on motivation and achievement, because the research does not address the troubling question of whether choice systems engender motivation and achievement or simply concentrate motivated students and their parents in a few schools.

Public and private schools

Comparisons of public and private schools also shed light on the effects of choice. For example, Catholic high schools exceed public high schools in student achievement, with student body composition controlled for; in fact, they seem to have the greatest positive effects of all schools on the achievement of low-income minority students (Coleman et al. 1982, Goldberger and Cain 1982).

In addition, some researchers have found that private schools consistently show higher teacher morale; higher expectations for academic performance on the part of teachers, students, and parents; and greater control over key resources that support learning (Chubb and Moe 1985).

There are, however, major problems in using this research to support the contention that choice promotes motivation and achievement. Simple comparisons of public and private schools understate the enormous variations in quality among schools generally. One researcher puts the matter this way: "Even the largest estimates of private school advantage are small relative to the variation in quality among different public schools, among different Catholic schools, and among different non-Catholic private schools. Consequently, in predicting the quality of a student's education, it is less important to know whether the student attended a public school or a private school, than it is to know which school within a particular sector the student attended" (Murnane 1984). If variations within types of schools are greater than differences between these types, then it is unlikely that parent choice by itself accounts for a large share of the differences in quality among schools.

The Full Set of Conditions

Whatever this research means, the findings do not support an unqualified contention that "choice works." More likely, choice is related in complex ways to a host of factors that distinguish high- and low-performing schools. Researchers and policy makers should focus on the full set of conditions that distinguish high- and low-performing schools—public or nonpublic, schools of choice or not. Parent and student choice may promote student motivation and achievement but only in the context of a number of other conditions, such as district and school commitment to the development of strong instructional programs and a high level of agreement between educators' and parents' expectations for the students.

Moreover, the nation's school improvement agenda contains a variety of issues requiring significant attention. These include enhancing teacher professionalism, increasing parent involvement, improving staff development, helping students acquire dispositions toward lifelong learning and love of knowledge, creating safe and positive environments, and using new materials and tools more skillfully. The question, then, is not whether changes in the service of teaching and learning need to occur but how to best support and encourage multiple and far-reaching changes within a school.

Good schools are good schools because of the commitment, talent, and knowledge of the educators who work in them and the engagement and motivation of the students and parents who are their clients. Educators and policy makers should be about the business of promoting such conditions, whatever they are, rather than arguing about whether a single factor, like choice, explains differences among schools.

5
How Do You Decide?

School decision makers considering a program of choice will encounter many questions as they work through the pros and cons with their constituencies. We have identified the following major issues as a guide, not to suggest every specific question or every reader's circumstances, but to provide a framework for such deliberations about schools and programs of choice. Questions are asked under each section. Many more could and should be asked not only during discussions about schools and programs of choice, but about all educational programs.

What Curriculum and Instructional Elements Should Be Present in All Schools?

All educational programs, including choice programs, should have clearly stated curriculum and instructional elements, and these elements should be embraced by all members of the community and reflected in all aspects of the school program. To use Goodlad's words, "all schools in the United States should use uncommon means in promoting common ends for all students." Common ends would consist of the broad goals of education that all 50 states have endorsed including intellectual, personal, social, and vocational development for all students. In addition, the ways of knowing of the important subject fields of mathematics, social science, history, the humanities, and the arts would also become part of the common ends.

California and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, for example, have created curriculum frameworks for identifying some of the common and important aspects of subjects that should receive attention in every school. These frameworks will eventually become the basis for identifying the constructs from which test items will be drawn. Then, as testing programs are created, districts and schools will be given discretion to determine the

means for promoting the desired results (California Commission on Educational Quality).

New forms of assessment, such as public exhibitions and performance assessments, offer a promising approach for promoting common ends. In small-group settings, children learn to solve a problem and demonstrate their solution. The resulting product can then be judged as evidence of the adequacy of their learning, according to a set of criteria that reflect the common ends. The criteria for judging the demonstrations could be created by the stakeholders of a school district and perhaps of the state.

Commitment to uncommon means would encourage diverse programs that attend to the context of the community and the students while promoting the common ends and the distinguishing features of the choice program in educationally sound ways.

What Conditions Must Exist and Preparations Be Made in Consideration of Public Schools of Choice?

In an earlier section, we distinguished between the private and the public good. The difference between the two concepts suggests that decision makers must pay attention to the shared purposes, values, and self-interests of the interested parties. Subsequently, the social structures and practices of any school and school program must not contradict the shared values, even if a number of people have particular self-interests in common that are inconsistent with those values (Selznick 1949). In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that "Democratic and constitutional processes are heavily dependent on the extent to which modal values and end values are debated in all sectors of society and made clear and salient and present throughout the citizenry" (Burns 1978).

Thus, when groups of parents, teachers, and school and district administrators convene to create a choice program, questions about the relationship between the shared value commitments and the proposed design features of the new program must be asked. For example, stakeholders may determine that the "brightest and best" math students should have access to a math and science magnet program and that advanced math and science laboratory courses should be developed as critical features of the program. If

advanced courses are offered in the magnet program and not in other schools, the program may conflict with the value commitments of *balance in the curriculum* and *equity for all students*. Access to advanced knowledge, which is usually available in advanced courses, may determine the subsequent opportunities for post-secondary education and employment in higher paying jobs for all students. Therefore, if advanced courses for some students threaten opportunities for all, the choice option cannot be promoted as an equitable solution even though some children may benefit from such a program. If on the other hand all students have access to the same kind of advanced work, then the advanced courses in the magnet program should be encouraged.

Staff development

Staff development is essential to the success of any school program. In considering choice programs, questions about staff development and training are critical because stakeholders need to be able to develop and maintain an effective, specialized program of instruction and perform new leadership roles. Two kinds of questions appear important for those who are deciding about choice: "Do we want to encourage teachers, parents, and others to determine the nature of choice programs, and, if so, how?" and "Do we want to invest in staff development so that the programs can manifest the important distinctions developed by the stakeholders and the common values that are presumed to make a difference for students?"

Affirmative answers to these questions lead to even more questions, such as:

- What skills should be developed?
- What training methodologies are appropriate?
- How can training be individualized to meet the needs of all who are, and need to be, involved in developing and implementing a choice program?

Parental involvement

Several aspects of parental involvement must be considered in deciding about programs of choice. First, active support and

participation of parents and the school's community are necessary for schools to achieve their purposes. James Comer has pointed out that a child's psychological development and academic achievement levels are more likely to decrease when strong differences among the cultural, economic, and moral values and between the academic and social skill levels of the home and school exist. On the other hand, when the home and schools are perceived as working together, students tend to imitate and internalize the attitudes, values, and skills of their teachers and are motivated toward academic learning. Thus, discussions about the ways to develop parent involvement and strong collaboration between the home and school are essential in deciding about choice programs.

Second, informed, feedback-based judgments about what parents want in a school program, what will encourage parents and students to leave their local school for another program, what information parents need in order to make decisions about choice, and how they will acquire that information should also be considered when making decisions about choice schools and programs.

Student involvement

Student satisfaction sells choice programs to parents (and other students). Students are usually satisfied when their ideas are viewed as important enough to be considered in decisions that affect them and when their interests are used in designing school programs.

Questions must be asked about the degree, frequency, and kind of student involvement that will occur in the decision-making process. These questions include: How will students be involved in the initial planning? Will students be involved in the decision-making process throughout the existence of the program? Should students have representation, elected by students, on any governing board? Will students be encouraged to express differing viewpoints about prospective and existing programs?

Multicultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity

In a democracy, people of diverse backgrounds interact every day. When those interactions are positive, they foster appreciation

of individual differences and encourage members of the society to participate fully. Schools and programs of choice must promote positive interactions among a diverse group of students. The investigation of programs and schools of choice should ask questions such as these: How do teachers, parents, and others build a student body whose diverse members respect each other and interact productively? What activities and programs will promote true integration of all races, creeds, and cultures? Is "melting pot" or "a salad bowl" the best metaphor to guide the creation of a school or program? In what ways might a program of choice promote multicultural sensitivity?

Resources for information

Despite our technological advances, communication is often the primary problem in programs and relationships. Three questions about communication must be deliberated when deciding about schools of choice: (1) What information is important? (2) How should the information be packaged so that others will want to receive it? and (3) Where should the information be stored so that it can be retrieved easily? Unless information is readily available to all, the program risks being labelled either elitist or segregationist.

What Are the Fiscal Considerations of Choice Programs?

There appears to be a rather widespread consensus that providing a program of school choice is an expensive proposition. After eight years experience with schools of choice, Susan Uchitelle (1989) says, "From our experience in St. Louis, we can say that a true choice program is expensive, but anything of quality costs money."

Therefore, an analysis of the financial parameters of schools of choice must be made for each local situation in deciding whether or not to implement a choice program. Below are some of the areas where additional cost may impact on the systems' budget. While school systems are already performing many or all of these functions, schools of choice may require both initial and ongoing

expenditures that should be factored into the decision-making process.

Transportation

In order for choice schools to be readily available to all students, free transportation is expensive but necessary (Nathan 1989). According to Glenn, "If we institute the policy of choice without providing free transportation, it will only exacerbate existing socioeconomic differences by giving an advantage to the children whose parents can afford to get them to school at their own expense" (1989c).

Facilities

Establishing choice or magnet schools with special programs and equipment may require renovations or modifications to buildings. In addition, magnet schools established in declining neighborhoods may need unusual renovations or additions; otherwise, the condition and safety of such buildings may become a barrier to the selection of those schools.

Staff development and involvement

The potential for success of any choice or magnet school is significantly improved when staff are involved in the planning. Once a decision has been made, extensive staff development may be required to prepare the staff to implement the special program to be housed at each school. This critical empowering process of involvement and training can occur only with the allocation of adequate time and resources.

Staffing

Magnet schools that provide for reduced class size or a specialized program requiring uniquely qualified staff may need time and additional funds to recruit and employ new faculty.

Parental involvement and education

Before deciding on choice or magnet schools, it is important to listen to parents and find out what they want in their schools and what they would be willing to leave their neighborhood schools to get at another location. In addition, it is critical that funds and personnel be specifically committed to providing a well-designed program of parent outreach and education in order for parents to have the information and counseling necessary to make informed choices.

Clearly, a school district should not enter into programs that promote parental choice without careful consideration of the costs associated with such a program. A program of parental choice should be embarked upon only after weighing these costs and only if the benefits to be realized outweigh the costs; our fiduciary responsibility demands no less.

What Are the Roles of Principals, Superintendents, and Board Members in Choice Programs?

A decision to implement parental choice should be made with the awareness of the new and changing roles that will be thrust upon both those responsible for organizing and administering the program and parents. The experience of some school districts with schools of choice suggest that the role of the central administration is turned upside down when choice enters the picture (Clinchy 1989). On the subject of new roles, Rhoda Schneider (1986), then acting commissioner of the Massachusetts State Department of Education, explained, "In this process, the role of the central administration has been to orchestrate diversity, to ensure that the common educational goals of the school system are met, even if in many different ways, and to see that no student is neglected in the process."

Historically, superintendents and boards of education have placed a premium on providing consistency and uniformity to avoid both the reality and the perception of favoritism among schools. To shift now to orchestrating diversity will require a radically different way of thinking. Questions for examining the new roles of administrators and board members might center on the

following: "Will school administrators have to emulate what Peters and Waterman (1982) call 'simultaneous loose-tight properties,' holding firmly to the core values that drive the organization while insisting on innovation, diversity, entrepreneurship, and autonomy from the rank and file?"

Further, local boards of education and superintendents will need to establish policy, rules, and regulations to:

- guarantee equity;
- establish the procedures for pupil recruitment and assignment;
- control the competition that is both inevitable and desirable in a program of choice;
- provide a comprehensive mechanism for parental involvement, outreach, and education;
- provide comparable resources to all schools so parents are confident that there are no bad choices; and
- establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all schools.

In addition to the many duties they now perform, principals will become the directors of marketing and promotion for their schools. Principals (and teachers) will have to develop ways to provide an accurate view of the goals, expectations, core values, and uniqueness of the school program and curriculum.

To What Extent Is Education a Public Versus a Private Good?

First and foremost, school decision makers face an important threshold problem: how to balance the interests of individual parents and students with the interests of the community as a whole. This question arises in a number of specific forms, such as:

- Should groups of parents and teachers be allowed to form alternative programs that result in less integration along racial and socioeconomic lines?
- Should highly motivated students of whatever economic or racial background be allowed to gravitate toward some programs, while less motivated students gravitate toward others?

• Should individual schools be allowed to receive corporate, philanthropic, or private funding over and above the resources they receive through the public school budget?

In each of these instances, certain individuals stand to benefit from the consequences of public school choice, while certain public values are at risk.

A complex balancing act

The conduct of public education is always a complex balancing act between the private aspirations of parents for their children and the broader interests of the community in such matters as racial harmony and equity in the distribution of public resources. Private choice is a fact of life in public education, whether it is acknowledged or not. But public schools, as distinct from private schools, are required to pay special attention to the broader social consequences of their decisions about teaching and learning. This balancing act occurs even when choice is submerged in residential patterns, parent influence in pupil assignment, and "special" programs. When school systems begin to change the basic ground rules of choice, however, the balancing act becomes more apparent to everyone.

In the early stages of considering new choice proposals, board members, administrators, and teachers should define their responsibility to the community as a whole, frankly and specifically. They should also assume the responsibility of educating the public about the broader social objectives of public education: public schools exist not just to satisfy the individual interests of parents and their children, but also to contribute to the economic welfare, the social and cultural life, and the citizenship of the community as a whole. Public school choice issues need to be addressed in the context of these broader objectives of public education.

Designing new systems

Having acknowledged these broader responsibilities, however, board members and educators should not use them to conceal the fact that parents and students have legitimate individual interests in public education. Differences among students can be taken into

account in the structure and content of academic programs. Parental preferences can be respected in the way programs are designed and offered. And the interests of educators in establishing a strong, purposeful environment for learning can be promoted in the way schools are organized. In other words, it is possible, without undermining the broader social responsibilities of public education, to design school systems so that they more nearly satisfy individual choices, needs, and preferences.

But these new systems will require very different kinds of knowledge and skill, in both pedagogical and administrative matters, than public educators are accustomed to. We need much more detailed knowledge of how individual differences among children can be better represented in academic programs. We need to know much more about the conditions under which teachers and parents reinforce expectations for student learning. And we need very different administrative models of budgeting, personnel, and pupil assignment than most school districts currently have.

As we have noted earlier, choice is a fact of life, both in the existing structure and in the future political environment of public education. The issue is not whether to allow parents, students, and teachers to choose, but how to use choice in concert with other factors as an instrument for improving schools—and how to do so in a socially responsible way.

What Core Values Will Drive the Program?

All educational programs, including those designated as choice, must embody both systemwide and individual values, which are embraced by all members of the community. (For an example, see an adaptation of the values developed by the Minnesota Department of Education and approved by the Minnesota State Board of Education in Appendix A.)

Questions about the nature of the educational excellence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the program must be asked so that the highest possible standards of performance for students and staff are strived for given available resources. Excellence and equity are compatible.

All choice programs must also consider questions of shared responsibility. Parents have a major responsibility to assure that their children are educated. Partnerships of schools, school systems, their communities, parents , and learners are more likely to provide appropriate opportunities for achieving important educational goals.

A major condition of equity is the full, fair, and accurate portrayal of various cultures, races, and genders in the instructional program. Questions about ways to expect, accept, encourage, and routinely address the diverse personal and group needs and aspirations of all students must be posed.

In addition, the potential career needs and ways to promote spiritual, social, emotional, and physical growth of each learner and staff member must be deliberated. Decision makers should consider programs to encourage students to develop positive self-esteem and become sensitive to the conditions affecting the lives of others. Discussions about the value of learning, competence, thinking, creativity, flexibility, and problem solving so that each individual attains maximum levels of knowledge, skill, and affect should be encouraged. Queries like the ones raised above may encourage debate and eventually agreement about a core set of values that might guide the development of choice schools and programs.

How Can Choice Be Accomplished Without Segregation?

When considering the pros and cons of a program of choice, few questions will be addressed that are as passionately embraced by the advocates of both sides of the issue as this one. On one hand, opponents of choice (or open enrollment) argue emphatically that "...school choice schemes have become a new form of segregation, in which students are segregated based on a combination of race, income level, and previous school performance" (Moore and Davenport 1989). According to Judith Pearson (1989), "...open enrollment is elitist . . . Choice will not be available to low-income or single-parent families." On the other hand, proponents assert that a well-designed system of school choice extends to minority and low-income parents the same opportunity to send their

children to better schools that affluent parents have always had (Glenn 1989b, Nathan 1989, Raywid 1989). Glenn (1989a) states that "choice of schools by parents and teachers—and the diversity that choice permits and demands—can create the conditions under which effective integrated schools can be created."

Segregation is unacceptable in a society committed to excellence and equity in all of its schools. Therefore, the exploration of schools and programs of choice requires focus on questions about equal access and integration. For example, are there ways to use

- a centralized application and approval process that is easy for parents to understand and that is above the influence of any group or individual?
- a policy of controlled choice that permits parents to receive their first choice unless it upsets the racial balance of the school they are departing from or transferring to?
- a free transportation system that removes the current barriers to complete participation in the choices that are available?
- a comprehensive program of parent outreach and education to ensure that all parents understand their choices and know how to negotiate the application process?
- resources to make all schools equally attractive in terms of their programs, services, and staffing?

What Role Does Pluralism Play in the Practice of Choice at the School Level?

Black and white, brown and red, rich and poor—all remind us of the continuing struggle for equity in education. We must remember that the nation did not start out in 1776 with an educational mission. Nor did the states and local principalities have such a mission until Horace Mann and others argued for public schools.

Today, lively debates over both the ends and the means of public schooling are watched by traditionally underserved groups to ensure that any change reflects their justifiable equity concerns. If the adoption of choice enhances educational outcomes for the children in traditionally underserved groups, equity concerns over choice will fade. On the other hand, if the adoption of choice leads to maintenance of the status quo or a decline in educational

outcomes for these children, then equity concerns will escalate. Questions about equity include the following:

- Will the same quality and variety of educational options be made available to all students?
- Will the logistical support necessary to make a choice system be provided equitably for all students (i.e., transportation, information, and other financial costs such as support for extracurricular activities, etc.)?
- Will valid minority perspectives be reflected among and within the curriculum options?
- Will the governance mechanism of systems that use choice be susceptible to influence from all groups being served?
- Is there solid evidence that the children from traditionally underserved groups will achieve more academically and socially under a choice system than under the present conditions or under some other option?

Minority groups are not automatically opposed to choice, nor are they automatically for it. In fact, one of the proposed solutions to the problem of school segregation in the 1950s and 1960s was to give minority students the money, the actual cost of their education, to purchase education outside the public schools. Many African-American parents had lost faith in the will or the capacity of the public schools to be fair and competent to serve their needs. School integration was then offered as a solution to the inequities of the time.

What the traditionally underserved want above all else is access to educational excellence through equity. The choice approach must ultimately earn its way or fail depending on how it responds to that concern.

How Different Must Schools/Programs Be From One Another for Real Choice to Be Present?

Is public school choice simply a matter of choosing a school or program? From the narrowest point of view, the answer would have to be "yes." From a broader view, any choice should be one based on the particular aspects and distinguishing features of a school or program. The question that must be considered is what

will distinguish one approach from another while maintaining attention to common ends.

In one study, Alves (1987) found that in a choice situation, 40 percent of the parents and students chose schools based on convenience; 20 percent chose based on academic offerings; and 6 percent chose for extra curricular or social reasons.

According to Zastrow, students who participated in an Enrollment Options Program cited the following reasons for their school choice: better curriculum and academics, location, social benefits or alleviation of social problems, better teaching, specialized classes, parents' alma mater, and to complete high school or maintain educational continuity. None of these reasons is uniquely different or distinguishing; each is widely available or can be made widely available.

For a school to be set apart from other schools or programs, it must:

1) offer a specific curriculum not offered at other schools in the school district (i.e. School of the Arts, Pre- Engineering, International Studies, Academic High School, and Vocational Schools);

2) cater to a particular age or grade level, based upon human growth and development theory (i.e. Head Start and Follow-Through);

3) target an identified population based upon demographic and/or sociological data (i.e. Desegregation Plan, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2).

Programs or schools such as these are called "magnets" because they draw from diverse segments of the general school population. The major drawback to such programs is the district's failure to expand these programs to include all those who seek admission. When all who choose are not accepted, then choice is exclusionary.

In considering whether to operate a choice program, it is best to make decisions early concerning program size and mechanisms for expansion. This decision requires discussion and action, using input from all members of the decision-making team (parents, staff, students, and pertinent others).

6

What Other Approaches Besides Choice Could Address the Problems?

Earlier in this analysis we mentioned that organizational response to the turbulence in the environment of schools has consisted of retrenchment, improvement, and in a few cases, major restructuring. In general, the problematic conditions of poor student achievement, the lack of responsiveness to the concerns of parents and students, the shortcomings of overt desegregation strategies, and the difficulty public schools have in revitalizing their programs cited earlier will be addressed sufficiently only when public schools are restructured.

While public schools of choice may promote substantial school restructuring, other vehicles for restructuring are also under way. They include an Incentive Schools Program advocated by Albert Shanker, Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal, and school-based decision making. As is the case with choice, evidence is not available at this time to determine the degree of restructuring and its effects. Nevertheless, these activities are possibilities.

Incentive schools are based on competition for significant additional funds for promoting major restructuring. Schools from across the country would compete for additional monies from a sum of investment revenue of approximately $500 million. The top 10 percent of the participating schools that achieved the greatest improvement over a five-year period, for example, would receive the prize money (Shanker 1990a). Incentive schools would remain neighborhood public schools but be freed from regulations in order to focus on the common ends previously mentioned.

Ted Sizer and John Goodlad are pursuing another concept for promoting significant restructuring. They are focusing on the importance of networks and important ideas for promoting change.

A network can serve as an alternative for stimulating inquiry, attending to important ideas, and linking one school to another. They can also provide other kinds of support such as opportunities for teachers, principals, and district administrators to discuss their common problems and suggest alternative solutions .

In Sizer's Coalition, particular schools voluntarily agree to embrace the Coalition's principles and to work with the other schools of the Coalition. The schools are primarily high schools and middle schools. The Coalition's principles are directed toward major restructuring of the secondary school experience. For example, a shift from teacher-as-worker to student-as-worker is encouraged. Coalition efforts are also attempting to shift from test scores to portfolio assessments and public exhibitions as ways to determine end results. The Coalition has brought together teachers and others to discuss ways they encourage students to be workers and the ways of doing exhibitions.

John Goodlad has brought together a group of 14 school-university partnerships. The focus of each partnership is to restructure schooling (K-12) and teacher and administrator preparation programs. The ingredient of self-interest—the university's for knowledge and the school's for practice—establishes productive tension between theory and practice for restructuring. In any partnership, key schools and/or professional development schools become the places for rethinking school and preparation programs. Teachers, university faculty, administrators, and community members link together to examine the activities at their schools and to create alternatives.

In addition to these nationwide efforts, local districts are also trying out alternatives. One option is called school- or site-based decision making. Once again the presumption is that once the ends are determined and tightly monitored by the schools, the means vary. Many district regulations and procedures are abandoned in favor of each site's pursuing various ways of achieving the ends. Miami-Dade County, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Chicago are each pursuing school-based decision making in a different way. Thus, it is clear that no single approach will solve all of the problems faced by every school. All options, including, but not limited to, choice, must be explored.

7
Summary

There has been a clear shift in emphasis in the last decade from schools as an instrument of public good to schools as a promoter of private good. Educators and policymakers are charged with maintaining a balance between the two—a balance that supports the common goals of a democratic society and meets the needs of individual students. This challenge is difficult, particularly in a country as diverse as ours.

Choice is one largely unproven strategy being offered to meet this challenge. Because of its current popularity, choice seems likely to be an element of our educational system for a long time. District and state decision-makers implementing and using the choice strategy must therefore consider the concerns raised by its critics.

Educators must implement policies that not only benefit individual students but also ensure that our schoools represent the broad, democratic interests of our society as a whole. While choice may be one factor in the achievement of these goals, it alone does not guarantee quality schools for all students. It is important, therefore, that educators explore, understand, and base their actions upon the full set of conditions that promote excellence in schools.

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Appendix A

The following is an example of the values developed by the Minnesota Department of Education and adopted by the Minnesota Board of Education.

SYSTEM VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY
A condition in every school whereby each is able to justify its use of public resources by effectively fulfilling its mission of learning.

EFFECTIVENESS
A condition in every school whereby each accomplishes its mission at a performance level defined by learners, parents, citizens of the community and state, and their representatives.

EFFICIENCY
A condition in every school whereby each accomplishes the highest possible level of excellence with available resources.

EXCELLENCE
A condition in every school whereby the highest possible standards for performance are expected of all students and staff.

FLEXIBILITY
A condition in every school that results in meeting the needs of learners through sensitive and creative responses to changing circumstances.

HUMAN EQUITY
A condition in every school that offers equal opportunity and appropriate, individualized support to each staff member in employment and to each learner in the educational process. Also, a condition that fully, fairly, and accurately portrays various cultures, races, and genders in the instructional program.

RESPONSIBILITY
A condition in which the school recognizes that the parent has primary responsibility to assure the child is educated, and in which a partnership exists between the school, community, parent, and the learner and that provides appropriate learning opportunities through which those goals can be met.

RESPONSIVENESS
A condition in every school whereby diversity of personal and group needs and aspirations are expected, accepted, encouraged, and routinely addressed.

SYSTEM EQUITY
A condition in the education system whereby each school is provided with the resources necessary to assist all learners in achieving excellence.

WHOLENESS
A condition in every school whereby each gives necessary and appropriate consideration to the potential career needs, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical growth of each learner and staff member as it designs and implements educational programs.

VISIONARY
A condition in the education system whereby emerging trends that will affect the knowledge and skills required to be a successful adult are examined and the knowledge gained is used to produce appropriate changes in the system's course content, procedures, and goals for learners.

INDIVIDUAL VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY
A quality in individuals whereby each knows, understands, and accepts the impact and consequences of personal actions and decisions.

CITIZENSHIP
A quality in individuals whereby each has an understanding, appreciation, and support of the institutions of American government and society and a willingness and ability to participate in the democratic process and in socially beneficial service activities.

COMPASSION
A quality in individuals whereby each is sensitive to the conditions affecting the lives of others and each has the commitment to assist others when appropriate and possible.

COMPETENCE
A quality in individuals whereby each attains maximum levels of knowledge, skill, and affect commensurate with his or her potential.

COOPERATION
A quality in individuals whereby each interacts with others in a manner that mutually benefits all participants in the interaction.

CREATIVITY/FLEXIBILITY
A quality in individuals whereby each acts and expresses self in new, improved, or unique ways.

ETHICS
A quality in individuals whereby each displays consistent personal and professional integrity and an acceptance of the responsibility to act for the benefit of all learners.

HONESTY
A quality in individuals whereby each is fair and straightforward in the conduct of human interaction.

LEARNING
A condition in individuals whereby each continually strives throughout life to learn more and to increase personal levels of fulfillment and competence in human endeavors.

PROBLEM SOLVING
A condition in individuals whereby each has the ability to identify, frame, and propose new, improved, or unique solutions to existing and emerging problems.

RESPONSIBILITY
A quality in individuals whereby each strives to fulfill the obligations of economic self-sufficiency and active commitment to the common good of society.

SELF-ACCEPTANCE
A quality in individuals whereby each has a positive self-image, through assertion of rights, holding personal, physical, and emotional well-being as an ideal, accepting personal talents with humility, and personal limitations with the resolve to improve where possible and accept where necessary.

SPIRITUALITY
A quality in individuals whereby each recognizes and accepts the importance of nurturing one's inner spirit, that creative force that transcends the human and the material.

THINKING
A condition in individuals whereby each continually strives to improve personal skills for mental manipulation of sensory perceptions to form knowledge, thoughts, reason, and judgments.

Appendix B

The following is an example of the curriculum and instructional elements developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. People interested in developing "choice" programs need to modify, delete, or add curriculum and instructional elements as appropriate to their setting.

TO EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES, EACH LEARNER WILL MASTER:

- Reading literacy—to gather information and data, gain perspective and understanding, and as a leisure activity;
- Writing—to explain, describe, and express a point of view and feelings;
- Listening—to gather information and data and gain perspective and understanding;
- Speaking—to explain, describe, express a point of view and feelings, and to discuss an issue;
- Numerical literacy—to apply arithmetic functions to life situations;
- The use of a variety of tools, including electronic technology, to enhance learning;
- Viewing and observing—to gather information and data, gain perspective and understanding.

TO PROVIDE A FOUNDATION FOR MEANING IN LIFE, EACH LEARNER WILL ACCUMULATE AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOP THE UNDERSTANDING:

- To participate in lifelong learning;
- To live successfully with local, state, national, and world political and social structures;
- To examine personal beliefs and values and their relationship to behavior;
- To make ethical and moral decisions;
- To be a responsible citizen of the community, nation, and world;
- To practice stewardship of the land, natural resources, and environment;

- To know the impact of human life on nature and the impact of natural phenomena on human life;
- To express self through artistic creation;
- To know career options and the general education requirements for each;
- To know world and national economic conditions to make informed decisions on consumer products, occupations, career needs, and uses of resources;
- To communicate and relate effectively in a language and about a culture other than one's own;
- To know the importance of geographic location in the functioning of contemporary society.

TO THINK, DECIDE, RESOLVE ISSUES, AND MEET NEEDS CREATIVELY, EACH LEARNER WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Compare, differentiate, and relate information and facts, and apply knowledge;
- Combine various facts, situations, and theories to formulate hypotheses or develop solutions;
- Critique and make judgments about materials, conditions, theories, and solutions;
- Generate musical, visual, and verbal images and movement as a means of self-expression.

EACH LEARNER WILL BE ABLE TO ACT ON CONTEMPORARY EVENTS AND ISSUES WITH A PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR HISTORICAL ORIGIN:

- Understanding the origin, interrelationship, and effect of beliefs, values, and behavior patterns on world cultures;
- Understanding one's own culture and historical heritage through the political literary, aesthetic, and scientific traditions of the past;
- Being familiar with the ideas that have inspired and influenced humankind;
- Understanding the manner in which heritages and traditions of the past influence the direction and values of society.

TO SET AND ACHIEVE PERSONAL GOALS, EACH LEARNER WILL DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO:

- Select appropriate personal learning goals;
- Make decisions about one's life;
- Plan, organize, and act to realize one's goals;
- Accept responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
- Work now for goals to be realized in the future;
- Select viable alternatives for action in changing circumstances.

TO LEAD A PRODUCTIVE LIFE AND ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF OUR SOCIETY, EACH LEARNER WILL DEVELOP THE WORK READINESS SKILLS OF:

- Applying the basic skills of communications, computation, and scientific principles to real-life situations in a technological society;
- Developing leadership and citizenship skills necessary to succeed as an active agent in a changing work force;
- Understanding employment opportunities, job seeking and keeping skills, and specific work skills as they relate to transition from school to economic productivity;
- Developing pride in good work and expecting quality in products and services;
- Adopting a positive attitude toward work, including the acceptance of the necessity of making a living and an appreciation of the social value and dignity of work.

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